

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

15 December 1971

AM

10:00

CONVENE, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

ADMINISTRATION

1. Dates of Next Meetings - January 19 and February 16, 1972
2. Approval of Minutes of November 17, 1971 Meeting
3. D.C. Department of Highways and Traffic - Modifications to Traffic Signals
4. National Park Service - The Constitution Gardens, on the Mall, between 17th and 23rd Streets, N.W.

SUBMISSIONS - REVIEWS

1. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

National Air and Space Museum - Revised Design
Gyo Obata and Associates, Architects
2. D.C. Government, Department of General Services
 - a. Proposed Development of Municipal Center, Judiciary Square - Revised Design
Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon, Architects
 - b. Fire Station No. 4, Sherman Avenue and Euclid St., N.W. - Revised Design
Clark Harmon, Architect
 - c. Shaw Branch Library, 6th, 7th and Rhode Island Ave., N.W. - Revised Design
Cross and Adreon, Architects
3. D.C. Redevelopment Land Agency

Railroad Bridge, 7th and Virginia Ave., S.W.
Revised Design
Sverdrup and Parcel, Consulting Engineers

4. *D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development*
Old Georgetown Act - Appendix 1
Shipstead-Luce Act - Appendix 2

11:00

INTERVIEWS

1. General Services Administration and Smithsonian Institution
National Air and Space Museum - Revised Design
2. D.C. Government, Department of General Services
 - a. *Municipal Center, Judiciary Square and the Court of General Sessions*
 - b. *Fire Station No. 4, Sherman Ave. and Euclid St., N.W.*
 - c. *Shaw Branch Library, 6th, 7th and Rhode Island Ave., N.W.*
3. Redevelopment Land Agency
Railroad Bridge, 7th and Virginia Ave., S.W.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
15 December 1971

1. CONVENE, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Members Present: J. Carter Brown, Chairman
 Nicolas Arroyo
 Gordon Bunshaft
 Jane O. Dart
 Kevin Roche
 Chloethiel Woodard Smith

Staff Present: Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
 Donald Myer, Assistant Secretary
 William Bogan
 Jeffrey Carson
 Sibley Jennings
 Marylyn Shaw
 Lynda Smith

2. ADMINISTRATION

a. Dates of Next Meetings were set at January 19th and February 23rd, 1972. The Chairman suggested a meeting on the evening of January 18th at 7 PM to inspect the General Services Administration lighting of the Federal Triangle and Seventeenth Street.

b. Approval of Minutes of November 17, 1971 Meeting. The Commission moved to vote on acceptance of the minutes of the November Meeting at the January Meeting to allow more review time.

c. D.C. Department of Highways and Traffic - Modification to Traffic Signals

The Secretary discussed articles in the Washington Post publicizing Highway Department proposals to hang traffic lights on long arms over intersections in place of the present corner poles. The Commission felt that the proposal was not desirable, but that since there was no submission, no action could be taken. The Chairman suggested that communicating with the Highway Department would be appropriate to insure that such things would be submitted to the Commission for review in the future. EXHIBIT A

d. National Park Service Design for Constitution Gardens on the Mall between 17th and 23rd Streets, N.W. The Secretary showed the members a program report by the National Park Service for this site recently cleared of the World War I temporary structures known as the Navy and Munitions Buildings. He stated that he and the Assistant Secretary had been shown designs for this site which included a variety of visitor services, a

6-8 acre lake, underground bus facilities, a tea garden, a children's garden, etc. The designs as prepared by the Washington Office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill appeared complicated and divergent from the original Olmsted and McMillan Commission plans to keep the area wooded and simple in character. The Commission reserved action until a formal presentation of the proposals can be made.

3. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS

a. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

National Air and Space Museum - Revised Design, by Gyo Obata and Associates, Architects.

After having carefully examined the model and presentation drawings individually before the meeting, the Commission agreed that they would wait until later in the morning to discuss this project. The Secretary stated that the museum's director Michael Collins and the architect would appear later in the day.

b. D.C. Government, Department of General Services

(1) Proposed Development of Municipal Center Judiciary Square - Revised Design Keyes, Lethbridge and Condon, Architects

The Assistant Secretary presented a model and drawings, pointing out that the major difference in the resubmission was elimination of the deck over E Street, previously objected to by the Commission. He also stated that the same consultant had been retained to study the Courts facility at the Southwest corner of the site and that subsequent presentations would be made on that structure. The Commission was informed of a draft study providing for harmony in adjacent construction around the Square with tree spacing, paving materials, set backs, etc. The Commission noted that a garage entrance would obstruct the vista up 4th Street toward the Old City Hall and withheld action pending an interview with the architect later in the morning.

(2) Fire Station No. 4, Sherman Avenue and Euclid St., N.W. Revised Design - Clark Harmon, Architect

The Secretary presented drawings and models showing a new roof design for this Fire Station which accommodated the Commission's November objections. The Commission withheld action pending an interview with the architect later in the morning.

(3) Shaw Branch Library, 6th, 7th and Rhode Island Ave., N.W. - Revised Design, Cross and Adreon, Architects

The Secretary presented drawings and a model showing a complete exterior revision to this Urban Renewal Area community library. In response

to the Commission's November disapproval of a solid brick design, the architect had designed a multi-faceted exterior surface of precast concrete with round bubble windows. The Commission withheld action pending an interview with the architect later in the morning.

c. D. C. Redevelopment Land Agency

Railroad Bridge, 7th and Virginia Avenue, S.W. - Revised Design
Sverdrup and Parcel, Consulting Engineers

The Secretary presented sketches of a design revised to comply with comments made at the Commission's November meeting. The exposed steel and concrete design presented a clear expression of the engineering function involved in this long span railroad bridge. The Commission withheld action pending a discussion with the designers later in the morning.

4. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

a. Old Georgetown Act - Appendix 1. Approved. The Chairman stated that he had attended a meeting of the Georgetown Board of Architectural Review and was very confident in their ability and meticulous attention to their tasks.

b. Shipstead-Luce Act - Appendix 2. Approved. Exhibit A₁

5. REVIEWS-SUBMISSIONS

The Commission returned to consideration of the Air and Space Museum. The Chairman called for discussion on the revised design for the Air and Space Museum, reading the action taken in November. Mr. Bunshaft stated that he thought the design had become more clumsy with the month's redesign. Mr. Roche stated that he had hoped that with more use of glass, rearticulation of the elements about the strong structural system would salvage the design, but that had not worked. The Chairman stated that the design was ziggurat-like, a situation aggravated by drawer-like wall elements protruding out from between the vertical towers, successively less as they got higher. He also felt that the silhouette suffered from a chunkiness and busy-ness avoided by the horizontality of the answering building across the Mall, the National Gallery of Art. Mrs. Smith questioned the use of glass-roofed bays on the south facade. Mrs. Dart expressed doubts about the resolution of the building's huge scale. Mr. Arroyo also expressed disapproval of the design, particularly of the complexity of the roofline. The Commission concurred that they would take no public action until the design question could be totally restudied with the architect and museum representatives. Further discussion was withheld pending a discussion with the architect later in the morning.

6. INTERVIEWS

a. D.C. Government, Department of General Services

(1) Municipal Center, Judiciary Square and the Court of General Sessions

Mr. Condon, the Architect, and Mr. Pavlick of the Department of General Services represented the project. The Chairman thanked Mr. Condon for responding so quickly to the Commission's November comments on the plan and stated that the Commission was in total agreement with the alignment of the structures flanking Judiciary Square. The Chairman also reiterated the Commission's concern over the C Street axis in line with the vista toward the Old City Hall from Pennsylvania Avenue. Mr. Condon said that it would be possible to restudy the ramp location. EXHIBIT B

(2) Fire Station No. 4, Sherman Avenue and Euclid Street, N.W.

Mr. Clark Harmon, the Architect, and Mr. Pavlick of the Department of General Services represented the project.

The Chairman thanked the architect for responding so well to the Commission's November comments. The Commission's approval of the new flat-roofed design was unanimous. EXHIBIT C

(3) Shaw Branch Library, 6th, 7th and Rhode Island Ave., N.W.

Mr. Eason Cross, the architect, and Mr. Pavlick of the Department of General Services represented the project.

The Chairman asked the architect to explain his redesign of the project since the September disapproval. Mr. Cross described his feelings about the unique crystalline qualities of his design as being appropriate to the function of the building as a library in the Urban Renewal area with high vandalism. The Chairman stated that the Commission unanimously disapproved the design and that the Commission hoped that it could provide the architect as much help as possible in a further design study effort. Mr. Bunshaft went on to say that the Commission felt the whole multi-faceted approach was unsuccessful at present and probably unworkable. Mr. Cross asked the Commission if they felt that his previous scheme had better possibilities. The members carefully studied photographs of the previous scheme and told Mr. Cross that returning to the original scheme would not be advisable. EXHIBIT D

b. Redevelopment Land Agency

Railroad Bridge, 7th and Virginia Ave., S.W.

Mr. Meyer, the architect, and Mr. Stanley Sherman of the Redevelopment Land Agency represented the project. The Chairman asked Mr. Meyer to describe the current scheme stating that the Commission was generally pleased with the progress since the November meeting. Mr. Meyer told the Commission that the new design was the result of stripping off the veneer of the previous

design and exposing the engineering design solution of this difficult span. Members Bunshaft and Roche suggested that some surface treatment studies be made of the areas above the abutments and to the railings. The Chairman stated that the Commission approved the general alignment and structural shape of the bridge and that the consultants only need give some more design study to the surface treatment. The consultant agreed to bring additional design studies to the next meeting. EXHIBIT E

c. General Services Administration and the Smithsonian Institution

Air and Space Museum - Redesign

Mr. Gyo Obata, the architect, and Michael Collins the Museum's Director, represented the project.

The Chairman thanked the architect for his quick and responsive revisions based on the Commission's comments at the November meeting. He also told Mr. Obata that the Commission felt that the modifications made during the intervening month had not been able to salvage the design, and that therefore their previous encouragement of the present direction could no longer be sustained. The Commission unanimously voiced their hopes that continuing study in a new direction would be better than pursuing the present scheme. Mr. Obata asked if the members would be willing to form a sub-committee for interim design discussions as progress was made. The Chairman spoke for the Commission saying that the members would be willing to do anything possible to accommodate Mr. Obata, especially since the proposed building would be one of the most important and prominent in Washington. It was suggested that interim material be sent for members' review to New York and Washington as the main focal points of the geographically diverse group. Exhibit F.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Charles H. Atherton

Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

December 28, 1971

Dear Tom:

There was a report in the Star a few days ago that new traffic lights extending over the street are going to be installed in a number of locations in Washington. This is going to result in quite a change to the appearance of our streets because, as you know, devices of this sort have never before been allowed to project over the right-of-way.

The members of the Commission feel strongly about the special character of Washington. They also have a responsibility to prevent anything that would detract from it in any way. Therefore, they would welcome an opportunity to discuss this project with you.

I personally am very sympathetic to the exigencies of traffic safety. It would be useful, however, to have the opportunity of learning firsthand of your concerns. Would it be possible for you to come to our next meeting January 19th to discuss this and any other matter you think would be of concern to the Commission?

Sincerely,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Thomas F. Airis, Director
District of Columbia Department
of Highways and Traffic
Room 508, Presidential Building
415 12th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

CA:JCB:kg

Exhibit A.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON OLD GEORGETOWN ACT APPLICATIONS

December 15, 1971

<u>NO.</u>	<u>ADDRESS AND OWNER</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>
OG 72-		
58	3107 M St., N.W. Monkey Business	Revised drawing showing support bracket and additional copy added to rear Restaurant Discotheque.
ACTION: Recommended for permit. 12/6/71		
59	1226 Wisc. Ave., N.W. Marriott Corporation.	6"x8" half round gold leaf letters applied over windows and entrance.
ACTION: Do not issue. Sign must be limited to name of business only. 12/6/71		
60	3034 M St., N.W. Rodney Rose	Convert garages to offices and change elevation details.
ACTION: Recommended for permit. 12/6/71		
61	1300 30th St., N.W. Mrs. Gordon Dean	Finish wall facing N St. A change of adding tiny air holes to wall caused construction to be stopped. Air holes requested by neighbor to aid his garden. Also iron gate door as originally planned changed to solid door wooden.
ACTION: Do not issue. Recommend wall be carried at same height for its full length. 12/6/71		
62	3132 M St., N.W. German TV Network	Remove existing tile, store front, etc. Add new brick veneer as shown. Add new fixed glass windows and entrance door.
ACTION: No objection to preliminary design. Request details and materials samples before issuance of permit. Suggest brick sills and lintel. 12/6/71.		
63	3900 Reservoir Rd., N.W. Georgetown University	Exterior repairs to medical dental school building including new windows, repair and painting of existing windows and repair and painting of existing portico ceiling.
ACTION: Do not issue. Recommend retaining existing sash design. Louvers not recommended. 12/6/71		
64	1506 Wisconsin Ave., N.W. Brass Boot	Sign Do not issue.

REPORT OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON OLD GEORGETOWN ACT APPLICATIONS (Cont.) 12/15/71

PROJECT

NO. ADDRESS AND OWNER

65 1039 31st St., N.W.
Yes, Inc.

Excavate under existing 2 story structure for new garage and storage area. Extend facade downwards and install 2 new doors.

ACTION: Do not issue. Recommend restudy of concept. 12/2/71

66 3604 Prospect St., N.W.

Three story addn at rear of residence.

ACTION: Do not issue. Recommend restudy along lines previously suggested. 12/2/71

67 1656 32nd St., N.W.
Barbara A. Rathe

36" high iron fence on front of property.

Action: Recommended. Issue permit. 12/8/71

68 3067 M St., N.W.

Peter & Paul Chaconas

Sign 4' high, 3' wide.

Action: Do not issue. Second floor projecting sign not recm. Suggest sign in window, 18" from face of glass. 12/8/71

69 3900 Reservoir Rd., N.W.

Georgetown University

Exterior repairs to Medical Dental School Bldg, including new windows.

Action: Do not issue. Recommend addl reveal or window frame to diminish front plane. Submit samples of jamb and muntins sections. 12/8/71

70 3604 Prospect St., N.W.

Samuel Bialek

3 story addn at rear of residence.

Action: Do not issue. Prominent vertical elements out of character with adjacent development. Recommend further study along lines previously discussed. 12/8/71

71 3068 M St., N.W.

Jean-Robert Beauty Shop

Awning

ACTION: Recommended. 12/13/71

<u>NO.</u>	<u>ADDRESS AND OWNER</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>
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SL 72- 24	1633 Madison St., N.W. Howard Luckey	Install 44' of 42" high chain link fence, also install two 3 1/2' wide walk gates.
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ACTION: Approved. 11/30/71

December 28, 1971

Dear Colonel Starobin:

At its meeting on December 15th, the Commission of Fine Arts considered further studies of the master plans for the expansion of the Municipal Center and the courts facilities around Judiciary Square.

The elimination of the overpass and plaza crossing E Street to the north of the Old City Hall is a major improvement in the plan.

About the only remaining questions we have are details of the landscaping on the corners of the square, and the underground parking ramp on John Marshall Place. This latter feature is particularly questionable as it would most likely spoil the view of Old City Hall.

The architect, David Condon, indicated that he thought it could be tied into the Courts Facilities Building and be relocated. The Courts Building, which is of special concern to the Commission because of its great size, is understood to be under a separate contract for study, and is therefore excluded from the Commission's preliminary approval of the overall plan.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Colonel Sam D. Starobin
Director
District of Columbia Department
of General Services
613 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

CA:kg

Exhibit B.

December 28, 1971

Dear Colonel Starobin:

I am writing to report that the Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on December 15th, approved the revised designs for Engine Company #4, Sherman and Euclid Streets, N.W.

We appreciate the response to the Commission's suggestions made by the architect, Clark Harmon.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Colonel Sam D. Starobin
Director
District of Columbia Department
of General Services
613 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

CA:kg

Exhibit C.

December 28, 1971

Dear Colonel Starobin:

At its meeting on December 15th, the Commission of Fine Arts considered a revised design for the Shaw Branch Library at Sixth Street and Rhode Island Avenue, N.W.

The Commission was unable to approve this project for a number of reasons. For example, there appeared to be no good explanation for the complexity of such a small building. The saw-toothed façade bore no particular relation to any functional need, and the circular bulbous windows were out of character with the rest of the design, to say the least.

I can assure you that the Commission is anxious to do anything that it can to move this project along. A simpler approach to the solution, with a less self-conscious striving for expression would be a step in the right direction.

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 19th, 1972.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Colonel Sam D. Starobin
Director
District of Columbia Department
of General Services
613 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

JCB:kg

December 23, 1971

Dear Mr. Mister:

At its meeting on December 15th, the Commission of Fine Arts considered a revised design for the Railroad Bridge over 7th Street, S. W.

The Commission was pleased to see the progress in response to its earlier recommendations. I am happy to report that the revised scheme was generally approved. The only thing remaining is a matter of detail, principally how the rough masonry and concrete come together over the abutments and the proportions of the concrete spandrel as it relates to the supporting girder.

It was agreed that studies of these features would be submitted for our review at the Commission of Fine Arts meeting on January 19th, 1972.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Melvin A. Mister, Executive Director
District of Columbia
Redevelopment Land Agency
1325 G Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20005

JCB:sjt

December 23, 1971

Dear Mr. Sampson:

I thought you should be kept advised on the status of the Air and Space Museum designs which the Commission reviewed on December 15th.

We had hoped that the restudy suggested at our November meeting would result in an acceptable design. Unfortunately, that has not proved to be the case, and we now feel the architects' present scheme is beyond salvage.

To this end we have asked Mr. Obata to study additional schemes and to present them to the Commission at the earliest possible time. If any interim material is available in the next four weeks we would be happy to meet in Washington and/or New York by special arrangement. Otherwise our next regular meeting is scheduled for January 19th.

Sincerely yours,

J. Carter Brown
Chairman

Mr. Arthur F. Sampson
Commissioner
Public Buildings Service
General Services Administration
13th & F Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

CA:kg

Exhibit F.

